

Congressman Earl Blumenauer has earned a well-deserved reputation as an environmental champion in the House of Representatives. A vocal critic of the Bush administration's efforts to undermine important environmental regulations, he has supported efforts to strengthen the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. He has also helped pass new laws that promote clean energy, fight global warming, and encourage more efficient use of valuable natural resources.

At home in Oregon, Congressman Blumenauer has been a leader in protecting some of Oregon's most treasured icons including Mt. Hood and the Columbia Gorge. He is passionate about having the federal government act as a better partner to help local communities to improve watershed health and protect open space.

[Global Warming](#)

[Army Corps of Engineers](#)

[Flood Insurance](#)

[International Environmental Issues](#)

[Protecting Public Lands and Oregon Treasures](#)

[Salmon and Watershed Restoration](#)

[Superfund](#)

[Water and Oceans](#)

## Army Corps of Engineers

In recent years, several government and private studies have found that the Army Corps of Engineers is often biased in favor of large projects, lacks adequate environmental safeguards in its planning process, and has manipulated data to secure approval for major projects. The GAO, the National Academy of Sciences, internal Pentagon investigators, and the OMB have all detailed serious problems with the Corps' current planning process. In particular, the Principles and Guidelines (P&G), under which the Corps of Engineers operates, have not been updated since 1983.

Congressman Blumenauer has been a leader in efforts to bring the Corps of Engineers into the 21st century. The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, which became public law in November of 2007, included a Blumenauer provision requiring the Corps to finally update the P&G to take into account modern science and environmental values. He also helped ensure that WRDA 2007 contained other reforms, including a requirement that costly or controversial projects undergo independent review to ensure that these projects are economically justified and based on sound science.

Through its construction of water projects, the Army Corps of Engineers is a major player in developing local infrastructure and working with local communities. The ongoing construction and maintenance of Corps dams, navigation channels, flood control structures and other water development projects dramatically alter the nation's landscapes and natural hydrological systems. No other federal agency has had - and continues to have - such a profound impact on the nation's environmentally sensitive flood plains, waterways and coastal areas.

In December 2009, Congressman Blumenauer submitted the following requests for immediate Army Corps attention in the next Water Resources Development Act:

**Project:** Increase statutory limit for Sec. 536 program to restore habitat in the Lower Columbia and Tillamook Bay Ecosystems.

**Local Sponsor:** Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership; contact: Deborah Marriott, Executive Director

**Description:** The In WRDA 2000, Congress authorized \$30 million for ecosystem restoration in the Lower Columbia River Estuary and the Tillamook Bay Estuary. Using this authority, the corps has conducted projects necessary to protect, monitor, and restore fish and wildlife habitat. The work of the Corps and over 100 partners has protected or restored 15,700 acres of habitat in the lower Columbia River. However, the ecosystem still remains degraded. By 1999, 75% of the tidal swamps, marshes, and wetlands that once existed in the estuary had disappeared and

the remaining habitat is fragmented. Thirteen species of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River are listed as threatened or endangered, and recovering these signature species remains a challenge for the entire region. Increasing the amount of funding for this program will implement important actions in the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion as well as actions in draft salmon recovery plans, EPA's toxic reduction targets and the West Coast Governors' Oceans Agreement. The request is supported by the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, a two-state, public-private initiative that is one of 28 programs in the National Estuary Program, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Project:** Establish a Sustainable Rivers Program to support environmentally sustainable river operations and floodplain management that reduces flood risk.

**Local Sponsor:** The Nature Conservancy; contact: Terry Sullivan, Water Resources Advisor

**Description:** In 2002, the Nature Conservancy (Conservancy) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) formed a partnership to restore and preserve rivers across the country. Under the Sustainable Rivers Program, the Conservancy and the Corps work together to improve dam management in order to protect the ecological health of rivers and surrounding natural areas while continuing to provide services such as flood control and power generation. Currently the Sustainable Rivers Project is working on 11 rivers with 26 dams that flow through 13 states. This partnership has demonstrated that science-guided adjustments to dam operations can improve river health while maintaining other valuable economic services. I request an authorization of \$125 million annually to expand the Sustainable Rivers Program to the more than 600 Corps-managed dams across the nation. \$25 million of those funds would be made available for dam flow redesign and implementation of new flow requirements to enhance natural conditions in rivers while maintaining operations. The remaining \$100 million would be used for property acquisition in floodplains, with a 35% non-federal match, in order to enhance more natural water flows and reduce flood risks to communities by conserving and restoring floodplains. These funds will improve the health of tens of thousands of river miles across the nation by using science to help guide adjustments to dam operations and restore associated floodplains to better protect water quality, fish and wildlife, and habitat while preserving other benefits that dams provide society such as flood protection, hydroelectric power, water supply, and recreation.

**Project:** Permanent extension of Section 214 of WRDA 2000, which allows the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities and to expedite the processing of permits.

**Local Sponsor:** Pacific Northwest Waterways Association; contact: Kristin Meira, Government Relations Director

**Description:** Section 214 has allowed local governments to move forward more quickly with vital infrastructure and ecosystem restoration projects. The authority is currently be used by over 41 public agencies in 20 Corps districts, including the Portland district. Stakeholders in my district report that additional Corps staff has resulted in a reduction of permit wait times not only for the funding entity, but for any individual or organization that makes an application with that District of the Corps. Permanent extension is important because lapses and short term extensions of the authority are detrimental to the planning and predictability necessary for productive contracts.

### Flood Insurance

Congressman Blumenauer believes the federal government can be a better partner to local communities in reducing the dangers of flooding to people and property. He has worked closely with city and county governments, citizens groups such as the Johnson Creek Watershed Council in Oregon, and businesses to better coordinate federal assistance and prioritize pre-disaster mitigation efforts.

On the Federal level, he is a leader in reforming the National Flood Insurance Program to ensure that it not only provides assistance to homeowners who experience flooding, but also that it helps keep people out of harm's way. In 2004, Congress passed and the President signed the "Bunning-Bereuter-Blumenauer Flood Insurance Reform Act," which reforms the National Flood Insurance Program to provide mitigation assistance to property owners to live in repetitively flooded areas. Rather than continue to rebuild, the program would provide repeatedly flooded homeowners assistance in either elevating or moving their homes away from flood waters. Those who refuse mitigation assistance would pay the full actuarial costs for choosing to live in a risky area.

Increased flooding is one of the impacts associated with global warming. Unfortunately, planning models used by federal agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Corps of Engineers do not often take this possibility into account. In 2007, the House passed Blumenauer legislation to require the FEMA to take global warming into account when updating its floodplain maps.

### International Environmental Issues

As a former member of the International Relations Committee, Congressman Blumenauer is a strong voice for improving the environment abroad. In 2002 he traveled to Johannesburg, South Africa, to represent the United States and citizens of the third Congressional District at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The world's population is increasing, and its supply of water is decreasing. According to the World Meteorological Organization, from 1900-1995, global water demands grew six-fold, more than two times the rate of the world's population. Across the globe, one child dies every 15 seconds due to lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Congressman Blumenauer has been a strong advocate for U.S. leadership in providing drinking water and sanitation to developing countries around the world. In 2002, the United States and 185 other countries

agreed to cut in half the percentage of people without access to water and sanitation. To ensure that the United States fulfills this commitment, Congressman Blumenauer introduced what has been called “landmark legislation,” H.R.1973, titled “The Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act,” which makes providing clean water a foreign policy objective. After overwhelming passage in the House and unanimous passage in the Senate, President Bush signed the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act (Public Law 109-121) into law on November 30, 2005. Since then, Congressman Blumenauer has been working closely with the State Department to ensure the law is implemented.

## Protecting Public Lands and Oregon Treasures

Protecting Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge, two of Oregon’s crown jewels, is a top priority for Congressman Blumenauer in Congress. In 2008, Congressman Blumenauer, along with Rep. DeFazio, Rep. Hooley and Rep. Wu, introduced an "Oregon Treasures" legislative package, which would increase protections for Oregon's Mt. Hood, Rogue River and Oregon Caves. In [March 2009](#) , Congress passed, and President Obama signed, this legislation to designate 127,000 acres of new wilderness and almost 80 miles of new wild and scenic rivers on and around Mt. Hood. For more information, [click here](#) .

Congressman Blumenauer has consistently voted against drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He is a co-sponsor of legislation to designate the 1.5 million acre coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge as wilderness, thereby permanently prohibiting oil and gas drilling on the coastal plain. He has also spoken out on the House Floor numerous times against drilling in the Arctic. Congressman Blumenauer visited the refuge in July of 2001. Congressman Blumenauer has worked to protect National Forests in Oregon and around the country. He is a cosponsor of the Alaska Rainforest Conservation Act, which would protect areas of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. He strongly supported the Clinton era Roadless Area Conservation Rule, and has co-sponsored the Roadless Area Conservation Act, which would codify the rule into law

## Salmon and Watershed Restoration

Salmon are a valuable economic, cultural, and environmental resource for the Pacific Northwest, and Congressman Blumenauer is a leader in efforts to restore self-sustaining, harvestable populations of salmon to the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Through his previous position on the Water Resources Subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, he helped secure millions of dollars for salmon habitat restoration projects on Lower Columbia River and Tillamook Estuaries.

Blumenauer has encouraged the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations to keep all

scientifically credible options on the table when crafting an endangered salmon recovery plan. He is a strong supporter of maintaining flows on the Columbia River and its tributaries that allow for the recovery of endangered salmon. Blumenauer fought to keep open the Fish Passage Center, a scientific body that provides data to decision-makers on salmon, steelhead, bull trout, and lamprey throughout the Federal Columbia River system when its funding was under attack.

Congressman Blumenauer has also been a leader in the effort to bring the local Johnson Creek Watershed back from the brink. This watershed was once written off as a dumping ground, and vital fish passage corridors were threatened by development and blocked by culverts. With Blumenauer's support, local jurisdictions began coordinating long term restoration efforts which are now bearing fruit. Culvert removal and in stream restoration has renovated miles of habitat, and salmon are swimming in Johnson Creek once again.

## Superfund

Portland Harbor was added to the EPA National Priorities List in December 2000. The Site is located along the Willamette River from downtown Portland, Oregon to the Columbia River. Initial study focused on a heavily industrialized 6.2-mile section of river between Swan and Sauvie Islands. Portland Harbor is contaminated with metals (such as mercury), pesticides, herbicides, and other heavy metals and toxins.

Congressman Blumenauer monitors the state of the Portland Harbor site and meets regularly with stakeholders, including businesses, Tribes, environmental groups, local government, and federal agencies to discuss the ongoing progress. To help communities like Portland clean up hazardous waste sites, Congressman Blumenauer has introduced the “ [Superfund Reinvestment Act](#), ”

H.R. 564. The Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program was created in 1980 to provide money to clean up the nation's worst hazardous waste sites where the party responsible for polluting was out of business or could not be identified. Before it expired in 1995, the money for the Superfund came mainly from taxes on the polluters themselves. Because Congress has not reauthorized the tax, the burden of funding cleanups of toxic waste sites now falls on the shoulders of taxpaying Americans. Reauthorizing the Superfund tax would ensure that polluters – not the American public – pay to restore public health. In addition, Congressman Blumenauer's proposal to reinstate the Superfund taxes was included in President Obama's FY 2010 Budget.

## Water and Oceans

Congressman Blumenauer understands the value of clean water, both at home and abroad. As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, he is working to find creative ways to finance water infrastructure projects around the country. On Wednesday, July 15th, he introduced H.R. 3202, the “[Water Protection and Reinvestment Act](#).” For more information about the bill, please review the [WPRA Fact Sheet](#) , [WPRA Summary](#), or visit the comprehensive [Water Protection and Reinvestment webpage](#)

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As a lifelong observer of the effects of pollution and runoff on Oregon’s rivers, Congressman Blumenauer is deeply concerned about the state of our waterways. He has co-sponsored the “Clean Water Authority Restoration Act,” which would clarify that the Clean Water Act has jurisdiction over all waters of the United States, not just “navigable waters.” On October 16th, 2007, the House of Representatives passed H. Res. 725, a Blumenauer resolution honoring the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act and calling for a recommitment to ensuring clean and safe water for future generations. He is a champion of Willamette River clean up and meets regularly with local partners to help local jurisdictions keep faith with the Clean Water Act, and fashion local and federal incentives that would reduce industrial, urban, and agricultural pollution in Oregon’s waterways. Water supply is a source of tension in the United States and around the world. Increasing demand for water in dry areas of the Western United States, for example, has led to conflicts between a wide variety of interests, including cities, irrigators, Endangered Species Act obligations, fishermen, and Native American tribes. Congressman Blumenauer has been involved in efforts to resolve the water conflict in the Klamath Basin. In 2002 and 2003, he authored an amendment to the Interior Appropriations bill to reduce water and pesticide intensive crops on the Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Wildlife Refuges.

Congressman Blumenauer is a member of the Oceans Caucus, which focuses on promoting scientific research of our planet's oceans, and the House Congressional Coastal Caucus, which keeps Congress informed about coastal issues and concerns, including needed reauthorizations such as the Coastal Zone Management Act, budget information and changes in Administration policy. He is outspoken about the danger that unsustainable development and sprawl will bring to the environmental health of our coastlines and oceans.

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